



THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

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August 4, 1995

To: Harold Smith
From: Joshua Lederberg, John Steinbruner
Re: The Initial Part of a Business Plan

In our meeting on July 21, we proposed an initiative designed to bring about the complete termination of offensive biological weapons activities in Russia. The basic idea is to set up sustained collaboration for the legitimate purpose of preventing infectious diseases and to induce those who have been implicated in BW activities to transfer their allegiance to that effort. If properly designed, such an arrangement would establish a substantial positive incentive for compliance with the BWC directed to the individuals and institutions immediately involved in BW activities. It would also substantially increased the risk of detection for those who attempt to resist compliance. You requested that we prepare the equivalent of a business plan for pursuing this idea.

Clearly such an arrangement would have to be developed in stages, and it is important to have Russian involvement from the outset. Quite a bit of thought and some judicious consultation is necessary, therefore, before a full plan could be advanced. What we can immediately provide are some practical steps for initiating the process.

The approach we suggest utilizes the personal and institutional connections that have already been established in the course of discussions of biological weapons problems conducted by the respective Russian and United States National Academy of Sciences. A proposal for collaboration that emerged from these discussions is attached to this memorandum as a reference document. It provides a natural context for immediate action.

We use the word "action" deliberately. We believe we can identify appropriate Russian collaborators for launching this initiative, but we doubt they will respond to an exercise of simply formulating a proposal. They are saturated with promising ideas that produce no practical results, and they are living under desperate circumstances. An immediate project is required to establish seriousness of purpose.

With this in mind, we propose an initiating plan consisting of three principal elements:

1. A mandate issued to the National Academy of Sciences to establish two collaborative research projects; first, the "paleo-pathology" project mentioned on page 7 of the reference document; and, second, an analysis of the natural incidence of anthrax. The first project would specifically involve the Institute of Molecular Biology

at Koltsovo (referred to as NPO Vector) and the second would specifically involve the Institute of Applied Microbiology at Obolensk, but both projects would be designed to include other Russian collaborators as well.

2. A special committee established by the National Academy of Sciences to design an institutional arrangement for detecting, preventing and treating especially dangerous diseases. The committee, which would include Russian and other appropriate international participants, would be asked to issue a report provisionally identifying the most dangerous pathogens and specifying how the basic functions of research, monitoring, assessment and treatment would be performed for these pathogens and the diseases they cause. It would also be asked to develop the institutional design as a collaborative extension of the current activities of NIH, CDC, and USAMRIID in the United States and their counterpart institutions in Russia.

3. The drafting of legislation that might be enacted by both the United States Congress and the Russian Duma establishing legislative oversight over all activities related to the most dangerous pathogens and imposing criminal sanctions on any individual participating in the application of these pathogens to offensive weapons. An extensive process of discussion and refinement would undoubtedly be required to develop such legislation to the point that it could actually be enacted, but it is important to introduce the basic principle of systematic national oversight in the initiating phase. It is also important to introduce the idea that national oversight should reflect international standards.

We believe that the two projects envisaged in the first element of this initiating plan can be started within six months and that a budget of \$1 million for 18 months of operation of the two projects would probably be adequate. We believe it is important to complete the second element of the plan within a year, but this will require an expedited schedule and a sense of urgency. Given the need for broad participation and a forced pace, a budget of \$2 million for a year might be required. The third element can be accomplished by a small drafting group of American and Russian lawyers acting as a subgroup of the committee designing overall institutionalization. This third activity could probably be accomplished with a budget of \$100,000 or less. If this basic approach is agreeable to you, we will ask the National Academy of Sciences to prepare formal budget estimates for these activities.

We acknowledge that in enacting these initial steps it might not be possible to engage the people and the institutions on the Russian side whose activities are of greatest immediate concern. If the initial steps are accomplished, however, they will provide the foundation for a subsequent phase designed to involve the MOD institutes at Sergiyev Posad (Zagorsk), Ekaterinburg, and Kirov.